

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
 NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
 OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGES

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Investigation of:

MV ETHAN ALLEN,
 LAKE GEORGE, NEW YORK,
 OCTOBER 2, 2005

Docket No.: DCA 06 MM 001

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Interview of: MARIANNE PERRY

Fort William Henry Resort and
 Conference Center
 Lake George, NY

Friday,
 October 7, 2005

The above-captioned matter convened, pursuant to
 notice, at 10:25 a.m.

BEFORE: MORGAN TURRELL

APPEARANCES:

MORGAN TURRELL
National Transportation Safety Board

SGT. WALTER SCHEDEL
New York State Park Police

MAURICE ALDRICH
Warren County Sheriff's Office

SEAN QUIRK
Shoreline Cruises

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I N T E R V I E W

(10:25 a.m.)

MR. TURRELL: Okay, good morning. It's October 7 at 10:25. We're at the Fort William Henry Conference Center. We're taking a statement from Marianne Perry. My name is Morgan Turrell, NTSB. To my right?

MR. S. QUIRK: Sean Quirk, Shoreline Cruises.

MR. ALDRICH: Investigator Mo Aldrich with the Warren County Sheriff.

SGT. SCHEDEL: Sergeant Walt Schedel, New York State Park Police.

BY MR. TURRELL:

Q. And if you'd just introduce yourself by name, please.

A. Marianne Perry, M-A-R-I-A-N-N-E, Perry, P-E-R-R-Y.

Q. And what city and state do you live in?

A. Lake George, New York.

Q. How long have you lived here?

A. I've lived in Lake George for nine years.

Q. And what's your occupation?

A. Well, I'm three-quarters retired, but I work at Shoreline Cruises in the summertime.

Q. How long have you worked there?

A. Occasionally three years ago, part-time last year, and closer to full-time this year.

Q. When you say full-time, roughly can you say how many

1 hours per week that would be?

2 A. I work between 30 and 40.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. Closer to 30 than 40 most of the time.

5 Q. And I understand your husband also works for
6 Shoreline Cruises?

7 A. Yes, he does.

8 Q. In what capacity does your husband work?

9 A. My husband is a captain.

10 Q. And to your knowledge, how long has he worked at
11 Shoreline Cruises?

12 A. Well, he retired from the bank, I believe, in '92.
13 It was before we were married, so I'm going to say '93, maybe.

14 Q. Okay. And can you tell us under what conditions you
15 were employed. Just describe how you came to Shoreline Cruises
16 as an employee?

17 A. Well, I have a little marketing company that I do
18 work, and actually the first time, a couple of years ago, I --
19 I was about to go out on a cruise with my husband. He was
20 piloting a boat, and Jim needed somebody to do something. And
21 he said, "Marianne, could you do it for me?" And I said -- I
22 think it was the ticket booth. And I got fast training. It
23 was that --

24 Q. Kind of temp work?

25 A. Yes. And that was three years ago. And the

1 following year I came to him and told him that our competitor
2 was -- had coupons all over the place and that I thought we
3 should do that. And he agreed with me, and I started putting
4 coupons out all over town and they started coming back in
5 droves. So this year I did that as well as dealt with a lot of
6 the chambers and the motels and Ginny -- oh, last year and this
7 year Ginny asked me to work in the office weekends. So when
8 you ask what I do there, it's kind of a variety of things.
9 When the kids went back to school this year, they asked me if I
10 would work in the booth. And the first week I think I actually
11 worked full-time was the week before last.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. Last week -- last week.

14 Q. And in the booth, typically who do you normally work
15 with in the booth? Is there normally a person in the summer
16 that you work with?

17 A. Well, in the summer I work there very few times, only
18 when it was a particularly busy day or the kids didn't show up.
19 They just -- if they needed an extra person, they asked me to
20 work. So typically it was with whomever was there.

21 Q. Roughly, to your knowledge, how many persons at
22 children, the kids -- how many person work in the ticket booth
23 over the summer? This summer in particular, how many different
24 employees worked in the ticket booth, do you think?

25 A. (Pause).

1 Q. A dozen, any idea?

2 A. Well, you know, there's three ticket booths, and you
3 get at least four people in with different applications. I
4 would say in the summertime they have to have at least ten,
5 because they have to rotate.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. I can't be totally accurate?

8 Q. That's fine. So there's three ticket booths. Are
9 they all pretty much near the Shoreline facility or are they
10 somewhere else?

11 A. Well, only one sells tickets to the cruises. That's
12 the main booth.

13 Q. And where are the other two ticket booths?

14 A. Right next to us on one side. It's a parasail booth.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. And then further down the lake there's another You-
17 Drive booth.

18 Q. You-Drive.

19 A. Okay.

20 Q. Okay, so we have one for Shoreline, one for
21 parasailing and for You-Drive?

22 A. I'm going to say two for You-Drive (indiscernible)
23 out of the main (indiscernible).

24 Q. Okay. Let's go ahead and ask you from your
25 perspective what happened on Sunday, just in your own words as

1 much detail as you can describe.

2 A. Two tour buses came in.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. The first bus came in significantly early and they
5 weren't due to go out until 3 o'clock. And one of the cruise
6 directors said that her people were tired and was it possible
7 to get them out early. And the captain who was going to take
8 them was already in from his (indiscernible) cruises, so I
9 asked him if he could get these folks out early. And he said
10 yes, and they boarded. And I'm pretty sure they went out
11 pretty close to 2:30, because the other tour boat was about to
12 get in and had to circle once or twice. And they boarded the
13 tour boat, and they left. (indiscernible) I can see the faces.

14 Q. If you had a profile of these particular passengers,
15 how would you describe these early passengers' age?

16 A. They were all old. When I say, "old," I'd say the
17 majority of them were older than me. The -- with the exception
18 of the tour director, and I think she was probably a little bit
19 younger than me.

20 Q. And their ability to move, were they in wheelchairs,
21 walkers, canes and so forth?

22 A. I did not see any wheelchairs.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. And that's not to say there weren't any, but I didn't
25 see any. I saw a couple of canes. (indiscernible) I don't

1 remember. I don't remember a walker, either, but I do remember
2 a couple of canes.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. And I do remember some people walking very slowly.

5 Q. Okay. Who arranged for these two tours? How did the
6 tour operator contact Shoreline Cruises and arrange for the
7 tour?

8 A. I'm not sure how that happened. It's not my area of
9 responsibility.

10 Q. Okay. Who would that normally be? Who at Shoreline
11 would be contacted for the cruise?

12 A. Carolyn Bleigh.

13 Q. So the passengers were boarding the Ethan Allen,
14 correct?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. And who was the captain who was going to take the
17 cruise out?

18 A. Dick Paris.

19 Q. Okay. And when you spoke to Captain Paris, did you
20 call him by telephone or talk to him in person?

21 A. No, he was in from -- I think his last cruise got
22 in -- I want to say 2 o'clock.

23 Q. Right.

24 A. I'm not sure. But I know he was on the dock, as he
25 always up. So I simply walked from the ticket booth and asked

1 him what he thought about taking this bus early.

2 Q. When you spoke to him, did you notice if he had any
3 difficulty or did you smell alcohol on his breath, or anything
4 that would indicate something was out of the ordinary?

5 A. Never, sir.

6 Q. And was he -- what was his demeanor when he spoke to
7 you?

8 A. Usual Dick.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. Very affable, very relatively soft-spoken. Soft
11 spoken and affable don't sound the same, but --

12 Q. I understand. Now when they started loading the
13 passengers, you returned to the ticket book. Is that correct?

14 A. Exactly, sir. My responsibility was to be at the
15 window, which faces the other way.

16 Q. Did you notice any other Shoreline employees
17 assisting with the loading of the passengers?

18 A. I can't tell you.

19 Q. So you didn't see any other employees loading the
20 Ethan Allen?

21 A. Hugh was out there.

22 Q. Hugh was out there.

23 A. Hugh was out there helping, yes.

24 Q. Now what time did the second bus show up, to your
25 knowledge?

1 A. (Indiscernible).

2 Q. So the Ethan Allen had departed before the second bus
3 showed up. Is that correct?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. And was that second bus full, a full -- how many
6 passengers were on the tour bus, to your knowledge?

7 A. I'm not sure. I would say 49 or 50.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. I'm not --

10 Q. Almost the same number as the other boat, would that
11 be fair to say?

12 A. Yes. I didn't --

13 Q. No problem.

14 A. You know, when we sell tickets for the boat, I can
15 give you an exact count. When we don't --

16 Q. It's a charter?

17 A. It's a charter.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. I don't know.

20 Q. The second tour bus had a tour operator when the bus
21 stopped and the passengers came out. Did the tour operator
22 speak to you at all?

23 A. Yes. And I told her that the other tour operator had
24 already been taken care of. You know, I had already spoken to
25 the -- sir, it was not the tour operator. It was a tour

1 director.

2 Q. Tour director, excuse me. Okay, was it a man or
3 woman?

4 A. It was a woman. I'm going to say youngish, not young
5 young, but I would say if she was 50, she was a lot.

6 Q. Okay. And do you know where this second tour group
7 was from, city or state or country? Do you know?

8 A. I do not.

9 Q. Okay, so when the second bus showed up and you spoke
10 to the tour director, which boat did these folks end up
11 boarding?

12 A. The De Champlain.

13 Q. And that was captained by your husband?

14 A. Um-hum.

15 Q. And do you recall what time they ended up departing?

16 A. I can tell you almost exactly on that one.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. Because they were loaded and ready to go when the
19 Horicon came in from its cruise, and that came in at precisely
20 3 o'clock. So it departed, I would say, under a minute later,
21 as soon as the Horicon came in.

22 Q. Okay. How often would you say when you are in the
23 ticket booth in the front there -- how often do these large
24 tour groups use the Shoreline Cruises, these 48, 50-person tour
25 groups?

1 A. I couldn't -- I don't know how many. I know in my
2 short experience that in the fall there's a lot. Can I go back
3 to a question you just asked?

4 Q. Sure.

5 A. According to the first woman that came in --

6 Q. The first tour director?

7 A. The first tour director that came in, the 50 people
8 included the bus driver and the tour director.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. More often than not, they'll ride.

11 Q. Did the bus driver or tour director take that --
12 actually go on the Ethan Allen, then?

13 A. The bus driver did not.

14 Q. Is it common practice for the tour director to join
15 the group?

16 A. I can't tell you how common it is. I've seen it go
17 either way. Sometimes they've had enough and they're just
18 going to let the people go out on the cruise.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. After they've been (indiscernible).

21 SGT. SCHEDEL: Been there, yeah.

22 MR. TURRELL: Bye.

23 MS. PERRY: In this particular case she did go.

24 BY MR. TURRELL:

25 Q. Okay. Did you have a chance to talk to Hugh Quirk

1 around this time?

2 A. Yeah, I did.

3 Q. Do you recall what the conversation was about?

4 A. He said something to me and said he had offered to go
5 out on the boat, but the tour director decided to go.

6 Q. On the Ethan Allen?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. He came back to the booth after they boarded.

10 Q. Do you recall any passengers who did not board the
11 Ethan Allen who were on the first bus?

12 A. No, but the tour director told me that a couple of
13 her people had chosen to shop. I don't know how many, whether
14 it was one, two. I don't know.

15 Q. Okay. So you helped the -- you helped your husband
16 load the De Champlain -- excuse me, the De Champlain loaded at
17 15:01 and departed from -- you went back to the ticket booth at
18 that point?

19 A. Yes, I did.

20 Q. And tell us what happened next to your knowledge.

21 A. Well, I'll tell you that one person, one man, did not
22 go on the De Champlain.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. And the only reason I remember this so clearly is
25 because I love Lake George and nobody insults my lake. And he

1 said, "I'm from Lake Erie. This is a pond." He was a very --
2 he was about -- I remember because I had to look up at him like
3 this. He was about as tall as (indiscernible). And he said,
4 "I'm not going to go on this." He said, "I'm from Lake Erie.
5 This is a pond." (Indiscernible) customers, but I wanted to
6 say, "You haven't seen Lake George," but I didn't. I just held
7 my tongue. But I do -- normally I wouldn't know for sure, but
8 the man was so offensive that I know for sure one person didn't
9 go on.

10 Q. But he was -- he would have been scheduled to board?

11 A. The De Champlain.

12 Q. Now when the passengers are boarding, does anyone
13 keep count of how many persons are going on board?

14 A. I don't know.

15 Q. So you're not counting?

16 A. If I was selling tickets, I would be counting.

17 Q. (Indiscernible)?

18 A. I don't know.

19 Q. Sure. In your capacity as a ticket operator, has
20 there ever been an opportunity where you've sold, say, over 40
21 tickets for one of the 40-foot boats?

22 A. A few times, yes.

23 Q. And at what point do you stop selling tickets for a
24 particular cruise?

25 A. That's very difficult to say. On our computer it

1 might stop when we get over 40 to 42, to say that we're nearing
2 capacity. Sometimes the captain has said, "You can hold the
3 rest of this line for the next one," because not so much weight
4 but enjoyment. You know, people -- I've had that happen to me,
5 but I really can't answer that question.

6 Q. How many -- let's go to the ticket booth for a
7 minute. What kind of records do you keep as far as the ticket
8 keeping and issuance?

9 A. It's a computer, sir.

10 Q. Okay. So when you -- when a person purchases a
11 ticket, what's the process?

12 A. Well, it's literally a computer that someone who is
13 as computer illiterate as I am could do. It's a point and
14 click. You point to where the tour boats are set up, the
15 Adirondac, the Horicon. If a person wants a ticket for, say,
16 the Adirondac, you point on that and it points on different
17 times that it's going out. You point on that and then it comes
18 up with all the prices, so you just put two adults or three
19 adults. It comes down with a price. You hit the -- it says
20 exact change or that you're going to count it out. And the
21 cash drawer opens and the tickets are issued on the printer.

22 Q. Now the person gives you the money and you give them
23 the tickets. What happens -- what does that person do with the
24 ticket?

25 A. Gives it to the captain.

1 Q. And to your knowledge, what does the captain do with
2 those tickets he collects?

3 A. Well, I guess it changed the middle of this year.
4 They used to keep the whole ticket. Now they tear them in half
5 (indiscernible), discount to the restaurant. (Indiscernible)
6 and he would keep a little stub about this (indiscernible). I
7 don't know what they do with the stubs at the end of the day.
8 (Indiscernible).

9 Q. Okay, so the captains collect the stubs. Okay. So
10 after the De Champlain left, when and how did you hear about
11 the accident?

12 A. I got a call. On Sundays, because I had always
13 answered the phone in the office the whole weekend
14 (indiscernible) I was often answering the phones for the whole
15 place. And I got a call from Chris Montana, "Marianne, this is
16 Chris Montana." And for a minute I forgot who he was. It was
17 afterwards I realize he was the chef. And he said, "the Ethan
18 Allen has just capsized off of Cramer Point."

19 And I said, "What?" And then I said, "just a
20 minute," because I could see Jim outside the ticket booth. And
21 I went out and I said, "Jim, I think you need to come in here."

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. And he did. And his face went white and he ran to
24 find somebody to go get a boat.

25 Q. Okay. And then what did you do next?

1 A. I asked one of the captains, and I can't say who. It
2 may have been Jim Young, to please watch the ticket booth for
3 me for a minute. And I went upstairs and told Ginny. At this
4 time I had no idea how serious it was. You know, I had no idea
5 whether --

6 Q. And this is Ginny Quirk. What did she say about
7 that? What did you tell her?

8 A. She said, "Are you sure?"

9 And I said, "Yes."

10 "Oh my God," and she ran downstairs and got one of
11 the guys that has a PD license to get on the raft that we take
12 people out for parasailing, and had them go up there. Oh,
13 excuse me, first had me call the sheriff's office.

14 Q. Did you call the sheriff?

15 A. I called the sheriff's office.

16 Q. Do you know what time this was?

17 A. I can't tell you whether it was between the time I
18 talked to Jim and Ginny, because it starts to get -- but I
19 called the sheriff's office. I could hear the, you know,
20 sirens and -- so I called the sheriff's office to find out
21 exactly where it was so that our people who were going up would
22 know.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. In fact, I think I called them back, because the girl
25 who called me wasn't sure immediately.

1 MR. TURRELL: Okay, thank you. And Walter?

2 SGT. SCHEDEL: I don't think I have anything to add.

3 BY MR. S. QUIRK:

4 Q. (Indiscernible) and you got a call from Chris. You
5 got my father.

6 A. Immediately, because your father happened to be
7 standing (indiscernible). I didn't have to transfer the call.
8 I just --

9 Q. What I'm getting to is would you have heard or did
10 you notice hearing sirens before the call?

11 A. I didn't notice sirens before the call. They very
12 well could have been.

13 Q. So my father knew. You were either calling the
14 sheriff's office or going to get my mother?

15 A. I called the sheriff's office at one point, and I'm
16 not sure whether it was before or after I got your mother. I
17 called the sheriff's office to pinpoint where it was.

18 Q. Was it on that phone call that you started hearing
19 sirens and (indiscernible)? Was everybody -- my parents were
20 on the way and you heard the sirens? I just --

21 A. I didn't notice the sirens until I ran downstairs
22 with your mother, and she started asking me to find some of
23 these staff boys that would have (indiscernible) licenses. I
24 didn't notice them. That's not to say they weren't going off.
25 I had the radio on. So I don't know.

1 BY MR. TURRELL:

2 Q. The radio in the ticket booth, is this a company or
3 is this a VHF, lake-wide --

4 A. No, it's just a little radio, because I was in there
5 alone. Just for a little bit of music -- no, it was not a
6 commercial radio. And then the phone started ringing off the
7 wall.

8 Q. Just a matter of curiosity, who started calling?

9 A. News media. I could not understand how the news
10 media could (a) know so fast or they think that we knew
11 anything.

12 Q. Could you give me a rough estimate now -- I think you
13 said that Mr. Montana called you. Do you have a rough idea of
14 what time that might have been?

15 A. It was just a couple of minutes after the Bill left.
16 I'm going to say --

17 Q. So like 3:05?

18 A. I'm going to say between 5 and 10 minutes after Bill
19 left. I wasn't noticing the time at that point, but it wasn't
20 long.

21 Q. And can you roughly guess how long it was until you
22 called the sheriff's office after that?

23 A. I called the sheriff's office either before or after
24 I went upstairs to tell Ginny.

25 Q. So a minute, minute later perhaps, two minutes?

1 A. It could have been a minute or two and it could have
2 been five minutes.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. I'm not sure whether I called the sheriff's first. I
5 called the sheriff's -- the reason I called the sheriff's was
6 to find out if they could tell us where it was.

7 Q. So the media started calling after you spoke to the
8 sheriff?

9 A. Yeah, within 15 minutes.

10 MR. TURRELL: I have nothing else. Walt?

11 SGT. SCHEDEL: (Indiscernible).

12 MR. TURRELL: If you would just acknowledge the
13 interview was recorded, and we can end the conversation. The
14 sheriff will ask you some questions afterwards.

15 MS. PERRY: I realize this has been recorded.

16 MR. TURRELL: Okay, thanks so much.

17 (Whereupon, the interview in the above-entitled
18 matter was concluded.)

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: Investigation of MV Ethan Allen
 Lake George, New York
 October 2, 2005
 Interview of Marianne Perry

DOCKET NUMBER: DCA 06 MM 001

PLACE: Lake George, New York

DATE: October 7, 2005

was held according to the record, and that this is the
original, complete, true and accurate transcript which has been
compared to the recording accomplished at the hearing.

Phyllis Jarvis
Transcriber